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Development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

CONTENTS

Page

II. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

Albania 2

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ALBANIA

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1. Albania is situated in a very important position in the Balkan region. This ancient region is today characterized by a general crisis situation, the causes of which have their roots in its historical past. Unfortunately, these causes were not eliminated, because there was a lack of just and sustainable solutions. So, the Balkan region has been dominated mostly by wars and conflicts rather than peace and development.

2. The historical experience of the Balkans shows that even when in certain periods there were initiatives for cooperation between countries of the region, they remained unmaterialized desires, leaving the place once more to conflicts and wars. Correcting this sad experience in history, through a better will of all Balkan countries, the European countries, the big Powers and international diplomacy, is the challenge we all face today.

3. Because of its geographical position, natural resources and human potential, the Balkan region has for many years been the object of interest of the big Powers. There have been other interests that have designed the historical map of the Balkans, after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and after the First and the Second World Wars. This map, which does not correspond to the historical realities of the Balkan nations, has, since the beginning, created the conditions to agitate for and to motivate the wrong concept of a "great State", planting the philosophy of national chauvinism, nourishing the policy of ethnic cleansing and occupation and changing of borders by force.

4. Historically, Albania has been among the victims of those Balkan developments. It has had to fight at different times and in different ways to preserve its national identity and ethnic territorial integrity and has had many other problems, some of which it is still facing today.

5. The barbaric and primitive memories are still alive in the Balkan Peninsula and are the foundation of today's crisis in the region. The unresolved serious historical problems in the composition of the Balkan map, the continuation of "cold war" practices, the flagrant violations of the human and national rights of the ethnic populations and minorities historically included in other States, the domination of old practices and ambitions, the existence of medieval dogmas and the application of different standards conceal the Balkan reality and prevent the countries of the region from finding a just and sustainable solution to the problems.

6. The current Balkan crisis climaxed with the unprecedented tragedy of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This crisis has two sides: the negative one, which brought the war with all its repercussions, and the other side, which forced international public opinion and world diplomacy to accept some of the fundamental causes of the crisis of the Balkans, be they historical or actual, as well as the main party responsible for this crisis, that is the Serbs, with their medieval policy in the Balkans.

7. The identification and international acceptance of the causes and of the party responsible for the crisis in the Balkans make it more realistic for the Balkan States, the United Nations, the European Union, the big Powers and world diplomacy to understand the situation and to find the most adequate ways to resolve the crisis.

8. In the opinion of Albania, there exists a basis of understanding and cooperation in the Balkans. The peoples of this ancient region have historically coexisted, have exchanged capitals, cultures and ideals, have given and taken from each other in many aspects of life, creating what is called the "Balkan mosaic". In periods of relative calm, these traditions of understanding and cooperation have been renewed in the fields of science, culture, sports, human rights, communications, etc.

9. The Balkan States today face two alternatives: to continue the conflict zone as an arena of national chauvinism and extra-Balkan interests or to change into a reality of peace, cooperation and integration with the ancient Western European continent, be neutral and balanced in relations with the interests outside the Balkans. The Government of Albania desires and deems it fully possible to turn the Balkans into a zone of peace, cooperation, integration and equilibrium in international relations. This depends, first of all, on the political will of the Balkan countries themselves.

10. The realization of this major goal requires first the end of the war in the conflict zones in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, the prevention of the spill-over of the conflict in the south and especially in Kosovo, through international preventive measures, the establishment of a military equilibrium in the region, the creation of a climate of faith for the beginning of a dialogue between conflicting sides and opposing parties in the presence of an international party and finding acceptable and sustainable solutions.

11. The basis on which to achieve these possible and indispensable steps is the correct implementation of the Charter of the United Nations, General Assembly resolution 48/84 B of 16 December 1993, the Helsinki Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and other fundamental documents of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) by all Balkan States, as well as by non-Balkan States with a direct or indirect interest in the region and in the process of Balkan democratization and European integration.

12. The implementation of the generally accepted norms of international relations and the protection of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every country in the Balkans will require the exclusion of the use of force and other means that the Serbs are currently using, which run contrary to international norms for solving the inherent problems and those newly created in the Balkans.

13. The overcoming of the current crisis of the Balkans and opening the way for solving the historical problems and those just created will also need the understanding and engagement of other factors outside the Balkans in the internal Balkan factor. We consider that the contribution of the United Nations - the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the

specialized agencies of the United Nations system, etc. - is of special importance to that end.

14. The Balkans is an important region of the European continent. Its geography, history, culture, problems and perspectives are closely linked with the continent. This makes it indispensable that along with the engagement of the United Nations, a greater commitment and contribution be given by the big States of Europe as well as from the European organizations and institutions such as OSCE, the Council of Europe, the European Union and non-governmental organizations, etc., for a solution of the Balkan problems.

15. General Assembly resolution 48/84 B emphasized the importance for all Balkan States to promote mutual cooperation in, inter alia, trade and other forms of economic cooperation, transport, telecommunications and protection of the environment, and requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of those concerned on the development of good-neighbourly relations in the region and on measures and preventive activities aimed at creation of a stable zone of peace and cooperation in the Balkans by the year 2000. Albania thinks that the Secretary-General has the necessary authority and possibility to undertake the preparations of this long-term programme and to include it for adoption in the relevant session of the General Assembly.

16. Albania thinks that, in support of the proposed programme, all those materials, reports and studies that clarify in a comprehensive way the history of the Balkans and its solved and unsolved problems must be used so that the past can serve as a basis for the programme. Forgetting the history of the Balkans and its wars and attempts to cover the inherent problems would be very harmful for the proposed programme.

17. The serious, realistic and natural consideration of the historical past of the Balkans would give us a clear vision on which to build the future of a Balkan with peace, stability and prosperity. This makes it indispensable that the programme has to envisage the future of the Balkans in terms of development, European integration and modernization through an increase in inter-Balkan and Euro-Balkan cooperation. The aim of the programme must be to turn the Balkans into a model of the Western European type in terms of good-neighbourly relations by stimulating, at the same time, the Balkan States and the European Union to accelerate the process of integration of the Balkans into Europe.

18. There are different positions among the Balkan States in relation to the past and the vision for the future. This makes it necessary that the preparation of the programme by the Secretary-General be preceded by a separate report undertaken by the Secretary-General based on different and neutral sources for each State, bilateral relations, the situation of minorities and the ethnic populations, the economic and other possibilities of cooperation and the difficulties of their implementation, etc. In conclusion, a final preliminary report, drafted by the Secretary-General about these materials would make the programme more realistic and more implementable in practice.

19. The bitter historic experience of the Balkans has been such mainly because its fate is frequently decided out of the desire and the will of the Balkans themselves. This conclusion has to be taken into consideration by the

Secretary-General, to whom we would suggest that, after drafting the final report and the programme, he organize a broad discussion through a Balkan round table, where the above-mentioned project-documents would be verified and win the acceptance of the Balkan peoples themselves. It would be good that this round table be organized before the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. Meanwhile, till then, there would need to be a period of reconciliation between some States that do not recognize each other internationally.

20. We think that the programme of the Secretary-General could contain these main pillars:

(a) To achieve peace in the conflict zones and the fulfilment of the international obligations of all parties concerned;

(b) To aim at the demilitarization of the States and the militarily burdened zones, in order to establish a military equilibrium between all States in the Peninsula;

(c) To take into consideration the reconstruction of the zones in the territories of the former Yugoslavia that have been gravely damaged by the long war. Without reconstruction and normalization of the situation in the zones directly affected by the crisis it will be impossible to pass to a phase of further development of the region;

(d) To stimulate and to help the process of the internal democratization of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), because the lack of the real democratic order in these countries is also one of the factors that has brought about the crisis in the former Yugoslavia;

(e) To envisage a series of measures to achieve an inter-Balkan cooperation through the establishment of confidence-building measures in the still complicated bilateral relations existing in the Balkans. The gradual normalization of bilateral relations, under the observance and the lead of the Secretary-General, will open the road to the cooperation of all the Balkan States;

(f) To take into consideration the situation in Kosovo and the solution to its problems, based on the need to implement the provisions of General Assembly resolution 49/204 of 23 December 1994;

(g) To envisage the preliminary measures needed to prevent further conflict in Kosovo, to demilitarize the province, to bring to an end the violations of human rights, to stop the ethnic cleansing and colonization, to reopen the institutions in Kosovo, to create a climate of confidence between the Albanians and the Serbs in Kosovo, between Prishtine and Belgrade, in order to begin and continue a dialogue between the two parties in the presence of a third party, until a final and sustainable solution is found to the situation in Kosovo;

(h) To envisage a series of measures to bring closer together the Balkan States in terms of legislation, applying the standards of the Western

democracies, in respect for human rights and those of the minorities, the environment, culture, science, sport and spiritual life;

(i) To envisage separate programmes for the development of the economy of the Balkan countries in transition, the infrastructure in respect of transportation and telecommunications and the environment, as a question without borders, in order to facilitate the economic differences that are among the fundamental factors for curbing the Europeanization of the Balkans.

21. Albania, as one of the older Members of the United Nations, has always implemented and will continue to implement the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and has been a factor of peace and stability in the Balkans. These elements result from the fact that Albania is a democratic country with a pluralistic system, based on the rule of law, where human rights and those of the minorities are fully respected, with a market economy, integrated into OSCE, the Council of Europe and the Partnership for Peace, etc.

22. The democratization of Albania and its steps towards integration in the European and Euro-Atlantic organizations and institutions are also undoubtedly a full and stable guarantee of its foreign policy. This policy aims at respecting sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and not changing borders by force, etc. and at influencing a solution to the problems of the Balkans through democratic ways and means.

23. Albania is totally committed to responding positively, with an active attitude and concrete measures, to any initiative that the Secretary-General would undertake towards the achievement of peace and stability in the Balkans, as well as its development and full integration into the civilized and developed Europe.

24. Albania and all Albanians in the Balkan Peninsula are aware that the future of the peoples of this ancient Peninsula lies in broadening the democratic spaces and not in dictatorships, in peace and stability and not in war and distraction, in development and prosperity and not in backwardness and discrimination, in being closer to each other and not in separation and parting, and in integration with the West and not in isolation.

25. The United Nations will always see in Albania and the Albanian factor in the Balkans a point of strong and firm support for the rigorous implementation of the principles of its Charter.